

**U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT  
ENFORCEMENT AND REMOVAL OPERATIONS  
ICE HEALTH SERVICE CORPS**

**SIGNIFICANT DETAINEE ILLNESS (SDI)**

**IHSC Directive: 03-32  
ERO Directive Number: 11853.3  
Federal Enterprise Architecture Number: 306-112-002b  
Effective Date: 01 Dec 2015**

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**By Order of the Acting Assistant Director  
Stewart D. Smith, DHSc/s/**

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- 1. PURPOSE:** The purpose of this issuance is to set forth the policy and procedures for detainees/residents who have significant illnesses while in ICE custody.
- 2. APPLICABILITY:** This directive applies to all IHSC personnel, including but not limited to, Public Health Service (PHS) officers and civil service employees supporting health care operations in ICE-owned or contracted detention facilities and to IHSC Headquarters (HQ) staff. This directive applies to contract personnel when supporting IHSC in detention facilities and at HQ. Federal contractors are responsible for the management and discipline of their employees supporting IHSC.
- 3. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES:**
  - 3-1.** Title 8, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 235.3 (8 CFR 235.3), Inadmissible Aliens and Expedited Removal;
  - 3-2.** Section 232 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 USC 1222), Detention of Aliens for Physical and Mental Examination;
  - 3-3.** Title 8, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 232 (8 CFR 232), Detention of Aliens for Physical and Mental Examination;
  - 3-4.** Section 322 of the Public Health Service Act (42 USC 249(a)), Medical Care and Treatment of Quarantined and Detained Persons; and
  - 3-5.** Title 42, U.S. Code, Public Health Service Act, Section 252 (42 USC 252); Medical Examination of Aliens.
- 4. POLICY:** The IHSC provides medical care to detainees/residents with illnesses. A significant illness is a serious or potentially life-threatening illness, injury or impairment that may involve inpatient care in a hospital or other extended care

facility, periods of incapacity due to the illness, or an illness that has continuity of care needs requiring significant coordination with external partners.

- 4-1.** The Health Services Administrator (HSA) and the Clinical Director (CD) at IHSC-staffed facilities, and Field Medical Coordinators (FMCs), should request to place any detainee/resident with a significant illness on the significant detainee illness (SDI) list for review. The SDI list ensures Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) HQ is aware of detainees/residents with significant medical conditions and the potential effect on enforcement actions.
- 4-2.** The SDI meeting is a collaborative effort involving IHSC, ERO Field Operations, and the Office of the Principal Legal Advisor (OPLA). The IHSC Assistant Director (AD), the IHSC Medical Director, Associate Medical Director, or Regional CDs may approve the addition of any detainee/resident to the SDI list.
- 4-3. Criteria for placement on the SDI List:** Detainees who meet the SDI criteria may be added to the SDI list based on, but not limited to, the following qualifying conditions:
  - a.** Critical illness due to a life-threatening condition (any terminal illness, cardiac arrest, life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias, coma, severe sepsis, severe diabetic ketoacidosis, fulminant hepatitis, brain mass, pulmonary embolus, significant intracranial bleeding, stroke, a condition requiring intubation/mechanical ventilation, terminal cancer, post-surgical complications posing risk to life).
  - b.** Anyone who is in intensive care for 24 hours or more.
  - c.** Potentially life-threatening medical condition requiring urgent action to prevent deterioration. This includes a detainee/resident who will need to undergo a medical procedure that poses a significant risk of possible complications (cardiac valve replacement, coronary artery bypass grafting, intracranial surgery, carotid endarterectomy, aortic aneurysm repair, etc.).
  - d.** Significant coordination required to repatriate or to release a detainee/resident in the United States due to their medical condition (end-stage liver disease, end-stage congestive heart failure, ongoing cancer treatment, acute infectious disease, unstable/uncontrolled psychiatric conditions, or oxygen-dependent condition).

- e. Anyone who has cancer and is requiring or receiving treatment (easily treated cancers like basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma do not necessarily require SDI monitoring).
- f. Extended hunger strike with deteriorating condition.
- g. Current significant complications associated with Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), severe opportunistic infections, tuberculosis, or failing treatment.
- h. Multi-drug-resistant (MDR) or extensively drug-resistant (XDR) tuberculosis disease.
- i. Severe cognitive impairment where detention poses a significant risk to the detainee's wellbeing (dementia, encephalopathy, moderate to severe mental retardation).
- j. Infirmity requiring continuous or near-continuous medical care (bedbound, status/post (s/p) stroke with permanent deficits rendering the detainee/resident incapable of caring for self).
- k. Mental health conditions that are not controlled and require prolonged ongoing inpatient hospitalization or that present significant detention management concerns. The significant mental illness (SMI) directive further defines the criteria for detainees/residents who have significant mental health conditions.

**4-4.** Detainees/residents are added and removed from the SDI list as directed by IHSC Managed Care Unit, which collaborates with ICE Field Operations and OPLA.

**4-5. Criteria for detainee/resident removal from the SDI List:** The following reasons may warrant the removal of detainees/residents from the SDI list:

- a. The acute medical condition stabilizes/resolves with treatment.
- b. The detainee/resident is no longer deemed to be critically-ill or to have a life-threatening condition.
- c. The detainee/resident is released from ICE custody.
- d. The detainee/resident is deceased.

**4-6. Significant Historical Physical Findings:** Significant detainee illnesses are brought to the attention of the appropriate medical provider immediately, if an emergent condition exists.

4-7. **Entry into the Health record:** The nature of the significant detainee illness is entered in the detainee's/resident's health record. Any detainee/resident with a significant detainee illness must have a Medical/Psychiatric Alert documented in his/her health record. IHSC personnel will document in the health record in Medical/Psychiatric Alert when the detainee/resident is removed from the SDI list.

4-8. **Reporting:** The FMC, HSA, or designee will provide daily updates on detainees/residents with serious medical conditions via email to the Managed Care Coordinator(s) (MCC) managing the SDI list. The FMC, HSA, or designee will provide daily updates of detainees/residents placed on the SDI list by close of business of each duty day. The FMC, HSA, or designee will provide updates twice a day or more often for those detainees/residents on the SDI list in the intensive care unit or in critical condition depending on the condition of the detainee/resident.

5. **PROCEDURES:** IHSC AD, Deputy Assistant Director for Clinical Services, Associate Medical Director, or Regional CD approves or disapproves the HSA, CD or FMC's request. If the request is approved, the detainee/resident with a significant illness shall be added to the SDI list. The HSA, CD, and/or FMC request(s) will be based on the criteria mentioned in section 4-3 of this directive. The MCC will add the detainee/resident to the SDI list upon approval, as noted above. Once a detainee's/resident's name is entered on the SDI list, IHSC shall collaborate with ICE ERO Field Operations and OPLA. Removal of a detainee's/resident's name from the SDI list shall be based on the criteria listed in section 4-5 of this policy.

6. **HISTORICAL NOTES:** This directive replaces the previous version dated 13 Feb 2015. It changes the NCCHC reference from 2008 to 2014.

7. **DEFINITIONS:** See definitions for this policy at [IHSC Glossary](#).

8. **APPLICABLE STANDARDS:**

8-1. **Performance-Based National Detention Standards (PBNDS) 2011:**  
4.3 Medical Care, Section M *Medical/Psychiatric Alerts and Holds*.

8-2. **Family Residential Standards:** 4.3, V. Expected Practices, 17. *Special Needs and Close Medical Supervision*.

8-3. **American Correctional Association (ACA):**

- Performance-Based Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities, 4th edition; 4-ALDF-4C-40 *Special Needs Inmates*.
- Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 4th edition; 4-4399

*Special Needs.*

- c. Performance-Based Standards for Correctional Health Care in Adult Correctional Institutions; 1-HC-3A-06 *Special Needs*.

**8-4. National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC):**  
Standards for Health Services in Jails, 2014: J-A-08 *Communication on Patients' Health Needs*.

**9. RECORDKEEPING.** IHSC maintains detainee/resident health records as provided in the Alien Health Records System of Records Notice, 80 Fed. Reg. 239 (Jan. 5, 2015).

**Protection of Health Records and Sensitive Personally Identifiable Information (PII).**

- 9-1.** Staff must keep all health records, whether electronic or paper, secure with access limited only to those with a need to know. Staff must lock paper records in a secure cabinet or room when not in use or not otherwise under the control of a person with a need to know;
- 9-2.** Staff are trained at orientation and annually on the protection of a patient's health information and Sensitive PII;
- 9-3.** Only authorized individuals with a need to know are permitted to access health records and Sensitive PII; and
- 9-4.** Staff should reference the Department of Homeland Security *Handbook for Safeguarding Sensitive PII* (Handbook) at:  
(b)(7)(E)  
when additional information is needed concerning safeguarding sensitive PII.

**10. NO PRIVATE RIGHT STATEMENT.** This directive is an internal statement of IHSC. It is not intended to, and does not create any rights, privileges, or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable against the United States; its departments, agencies, or other entities; its officers or employees; or any other person.